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Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-sixth year

Letter dated 29 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

A letter dated 6 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Armenia to the United Nations has been circulated as a document of the General Assembly and as a document of the Security Council (A/55/984-S/2001/569), in what seems to be a convoluted reply to my letter of 4 May 2001 (A/55/931-S/2001/456) concerning a recent decision taken by the United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio.

To repeat, the said court has sentenced Mourad Topalian, an Armenian activist and former chairman of the Armenian National Committee of America, to 37 months of imprisonment on two counts of terrorism-linked federal crimes, basing its decision on the irrefutable findings of competent United States authorities. Specifically, the explosive material used in the car bombing on 12 October 1980 at the United Nations Plaza wounding five people and causing great damage to several buildings has been linked to the explosive material stored by Topalian. The details supplied in my letter of 4 May left no doubt that this specific court decision had direct relevance to two General Assembly resolutions under the heading "Consideration of effective measures to enhance the protection, security and safety of diplomatic and consular missions and representatives" and "Measures to eliminate international terrorism", i.e. agenda items 156 and 164. Hence the sole intent and purport of my previous letter.

To be precise, my letter did not contain a single reference to the Republic of Armenia. I did register, on the other hand, the official finding of the United States federal authorities that the ultra-nationalist Armenian terrorist group called the "Justice Commandos of the Armenian Genocide" is the military wing of the Dashnak Party in Yerevan, Armenia, and that the above-referred Armenian National

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Committee of America an affiliate of the same. I should further underline that these connections are not revealed for the first time by the decision of the said district court but had been already well documented in scholarly studies including the works of Mr. Michael Gunter, who provided ample evidence from the Dashnak press to that effect.

The "venturing in a very unambiguous context inadmissible within the walls of the United Nations," to use the words of the Permanent Representative of Armenia, is a deceitful statement; a bare attempt, in fact, to conceal the real motivation of availing himself of the opportunity to seize a single reference in order to pour out hatred and propagate Armenian falsifications within the walls of the United Nations.

Apparently, even when conveying to the international community important disclosures that have a direct bearing on working agenda items of the General Assembly, a mere reference to the city of Yerevan as the seat of the Dashnak Party is a sufficiently powerful incentive to engage the Permanent Representative of Armenia in linguistic diatribes.

The language employed by the Permanent Representative of Armenia transgresses the basic and time-honoured rules governing civilized conversation between States. Sadly, I no longer expect such compliance from the representative of a country which, anyhow, remained bellicose and irredentist from the very first day of its independence, and which, to this date, occupies one fourth of the territory of its neighbour to the east, Azerbaijan.

Furthermore, the Permanent Representative of Armenia, with remarkable ease of mind, fails to see the essence and thrust of my letter directed towards increased international cooperation to prevent acts of terrorism against diplomatic and consular representatives and missions, as well as international cooperation against terrorism. Instead, the Permanent Representative of Armenia brings forth the accusation that I attempted to link "official Yerevan with certain individual acts of desperation". Let me be very explicit on this point: If I ever feel the need to refer to a link between terrorism and the Armenian Government, I will do exactly that and leave no room for ambiguity.

If Armenia's stance against terrorism is sincere, then it would be worth their while to study the reasons which led the district court to its decision. Trying to label unrepentant terrorism as "individual acts of desperation", on the other hand, is a felony. Only those who are brainwashed enough to believe that ends justify means are capable of regarding a total of more than 230 armed attacks killing 70 innocent people, including 31 Turkish diplomats, and wounding 524 civilians as "individual acts"; and only those, I would like to add, can claim such unabashed defence of evil.

The terrorist acts in question were in fact directed at the same target, namely, Turkish citizens and/or representations, and were coordinated through a maze of complex networks. The car bombing act at the United Nations Plaza, for instance, was carried out on the same day when three other terrorist acts took place in different countries against Turkish representations. While this is the objective reality, the Permanent Representative of Armenia portrays them as "individual acts", and goes on blessing such cold-blooded crimes by pronouncing that these were "aimed at drawing the attention of the world community to the Turkish Government's denial of the fact of the Genocide of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire from 1915 to 1923". I do not find surprising, after all, that such a perplexed

handling of reality ends up by accepting degrees of terrorism where there can be none. This ambiguity towards terrorist methods devalues in a very significant way the assurances brought forth by the Permanent Representative of Armenia in the latter paragraphs of his letter concerning their stance against terrorism. Remarkably, the letter of the Permanent Representative of Armenia neither refers to nor condemns the terrorist crime perpetrated by Topalian which was the subject matter of my previous letter in the first place.

As a matter of fact, the whole purpose of the letter of the Permanent Representative of Armenia is to reiterate in an aggressive manner the "nationalist Armenian version" of events that took place during the First World War, a blackened era for all the peoples of Anatolia, indeed for humankind.

Finally, the Permanent Representative of Armenia, in yet another twisting of words, intents and places claims that the political wing of the terrorist organization "Grey Wolves", of which Ali Ağca, the terrorist who made an attempt on the life of the Pope in 1981, was a member, makes up part of the current government coalition in Turkey. This is indeed stretching the limits of imagination too far. The political party in question disavowed Ali Ağca two decades ago. The fact is that Ali Ağca is still in prison in Turkey today.

The letter of the Permanent Representative of Armenia contains several allegations along with language that accuses Turkey of "juggling" with historical data. In order to shed light on the actual course of events which were referred to, I deem it necessary to provide the information annexed herewith.

I should be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex could be distributed as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 156 and 164, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Umit **Pamir**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 29 June 2001 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: English]

It is a fact that after nearly 700 years of peaceful coexistence throughout which the Turkish and Armenian communities enriched each other culturally, socially, economically and otherwise, all the while enjoying exemplary mutual respect — for the want of which we today have to witness ethnic cleansings and carnage in various parts of the world — the two communities saw their relationship fall apart at the turn of the last century at the instigation of the imperialist Powers of the time.

There are hundreds of scholarly works describing the ill-fated designs of the imperialist Powers of the time on the already debilitated Ottoman Empire. I would like to refer to I. V. Bestuzhev's article entitled "Russian Foreign Policy, February-June 1914", which appeared in *1914: The Coming of the First World War*, edited by Walter Laqueur and George Mosse:

> "The move towards a rapprochement with Turkey after the Balkan Wars turned out to be highly unpopular in Russian bourgeois-landlord circles, which were now coming out in favour of a final division of the Ottoman Empire. With this object in view, an entire system of measures was worked out to strengthen Russian influence in Turkey. It contemplated the formation of an autonomous Armenia under Russian protection as the most powerful means of exerting pressure."

Eventually, thousands of armed Armenians did in fact spearhead a massive Russian invasion of eastern Anatolia, faithfully fulfilling the promise given to Tsar Nicholas II by the President of the Armenian national Bureau on 5 November 1914 in Tbilisi: "From all countries Armenians are hurrying to enter the ranks of the glorious Russian army, with their blood to serve the victory of the Russian arms."

The Armenian rebellion began in late 1914. More than 15,000 Anatolian Armenians who went to the Russian South Caucasus for training returned to join the local rebels. Telegraph lines were cut; roads through strategic mountain passes were seized; hundreds of Ottoman officials were attacked, particularly recruiting officers, throughout the east; outlying villages were assaulted. In the service of the Tsarist armies, they seized the city of Van in March 1915 from a weak Ottoman garrison and proceeded to kill 60,000 Turks.

Boghos Nubar, one of the foremost leaders of the Armenians was telling the truth in his letter to *The Times* of London, published on 30 January 1919, begging the allies at the Paris Conference to recognize the "service" of the Armenians:

> "The Armenians have been, since the beginning of the war, de facto belligerents, since they fought alongside the Allies on all fronts, in Palestine and Syria, where the Armenian volunteers recruited by the Armenian National Delegation at the request of the French Government, made up more than half of the French contingent. In the Caucasus, without mentioning the 15,000 Armenians in the Imperial Russian Army, more than 40,000 of their volunteers offered resistance to the Turkish armies."

It is no secret that on the second day of August 1914, the long-running sense of malaise in Europe came to a head and open and secret alliances designed to preserve or to overturn the balance of power in Europe came into operation, starting the massacre of the peoples of Europe. The Ottoman Empire, during the years preceding the outbreak of the First World War, did not take part in the alliance system that wrecked Europe. To be precise, it was the Ottoman Empire itself which was regarded as easy prey within the wider imperialist designs and aspirations of the major Powers. The Empire was not among the six ranking European Powers of the time, and it had been under attack since July 1911.

At the time, nations living within the fold of the multi-ethnic empires, including the Austro-Hungarian Dual Monarchy and the Russian Empire, generally sought to better their lot as nationalism was the fashion of the day. However, the Armenian nationalistic movement was captured by its war-mongering elements ready to start armed rebellion and employ terrorist tactics.

Powers vying for the territories of the Ottoman Empire indeed found a willing collaborator in the ultra-

nationalist Armenian leadership, which, at such a historic juncture, forsook the true and lasting interests of their people, threw all the peoples of eastern Anatolia into imminent danger knowingly risking widespread communal violence in their haste to carve out an independent Armenia.

One should ask to what extent the Armenian leadership of the time bloodied its hands by totally disregarding the dangers inherent in fomenting violence and revolution at a time of war and became responsible for the tragedy that befell the peoples of Anatolia, including those on whose behalf they pretended to speak. Clearly, the actions of the Armenian rebels exacerbated the growing division and mutual fear between the Turks and Armenians of the Ottoman East. After all, outright terror was the chosen weapon of Armenian rebels, and the lands they coveted were overwhelmingly Turkish and Muslim in population.

The Armenian falsifiers today commemorate 24 April 1915 as an august date in the history of their struggle, conveniently forgetting that the Allied fleet had arrived at the head of the Gallipoli peninsula only three days before, on 21 April 1915, presenting a tremendous threat to the country whose citizens of Armenian origin, at the ranks of Foreign Minister, ambassadors, and thousands of accomplished people in all walks of life, along with the peasantry, were leading an uncomplicated life until the call for arms and rebellion wrecked stability.

As a matter of fact, the Armenian falsifiers conveniently disregard so many facts essential to a humane, spirited, forward-looking and constructive understanding of the tragic events which took place within the fold of a dying and partly occupied country, that as a result, only hatred and rage, unfortunately, govern their general attitude towards the Turks.

In an article that appeared in the *New York Review of Books* on 8 April 1999, the eminent writer Ian Buruma highlighted some controversial aspects of the focus on identity through victimization in contemporary society. Buruma does not negate the memory of suffering, but he questions "when a culture, ethnic, religious or national community bases its communal identity almost entirely on the sentimental solidarity of remembered victimhood, on the way lies historical myopia and, in extreme circumstances, even vendetta". The problem, as Buruma sees it, is that this "sense of victimization impedes understanding among people; it cannot result in mutual understanding".

It is because of this predicament that the falsifiers would not see that the Armenians who lived in cities where Ottoman control remained intact in western Anatolia were neither deported nor molested; that when the Tsarist armies attacked and occupied eastern Anatolia, more than a million Turks and Muslims had to flee as refugees and were attacked on the roads by Armenian bands; that there was a collapse of authority in eastern Anatolia in the wake of the Tsarist assaults; that killings and massacres were done mutually.

The Armenian falsifiers would rather prefer to claim that if any single Turk was killed during these tragic times, then that was strictly due to self-defence, that no civilian Turks were murdered, raped or pillaged whereas even the Tsarist officers were horrified to see the frenzy of massacring defenceless Turks perpetrated by armed Armenian gangs and paramilitaries in the most vicious manner.

The Armenian falsifiers would reject the description of the above-cited tragic events as civil war and inter-communal violence, because they would like us to ignore the Turkish suffering, and solely focus on Armenian suffering.

As one of the most respected scholars on the history of the Middle East, Professor Bernard Lewis, wrote for *Ha'aretz* on 23 January 1998:

> "The Armenians want to benefit from both worlds. On the one hand, they speak with pride of their struggle against Ottoman despotism, while on the other hand, they compare their tragedy with the Jewish Holocaust."

Even one dead is too many, Turkish or Armenian! But it was a civil war within a world war, where all sides party to the conflict suffered terribly. In the same area, at the same time, and under the same conditions, nearly 3 million Turks and other Muslims perished due to killings, starvation and epidemics.

In bringing forth the question of guilt for this all-encompassing human disaster, fabrications of documents have been taken as truth and authentic documents have been ignored as a result of nationalistic Armenian activism. Unsubstantiated assertions and wartime propaganda have been accepted, whereas the brief of wartime propagandists was simply to make the enemies look as bad as

possible, and make themselves and their friends look as good as could be. This is why the Armenian falsifiers still use the tainted and one-sided documents distributed by the wartime British propaganda machine prepared by the War Propaganda Bureau stationed throughout the war years at Wellington House in London.

Likewise, historians who attempted to find out the truth have been called "genocide deniers". A climate has been created in which historians fear to examine history because of feared personal results. Politicians have decided that they can legislate history, even though they know little or nothing of that history. Slogans have replaced historical judgement.

The Armenian falsifiers are yet to produce a single authentic Ottoman Government dispatch ordering the killing of Armenians. The alleged "genocide of 1.5 million Armenians" should have left countless pieces of evidence that would have saved the Armenian falsifiers from relying upon wartime propaganda, one-sided stories of Christian missionaries who mostly listened to Christian Armenians and not the Muslim Turks, as well as depending solely upon the truly heart-breaking stories of the survivors. It would help them immensely to hear the Turkish side of this argument instead of calling for honouring some of the dead and not all of the dead.

The Permanent Representative of Armenia challenges us that we are "not in a position to disprove with the help of historical data the irrefutable fact of the Genocide". I would take this statement as the normal outcome of their particular world view. If the facts do not fit their theories, the falsifier nationalists would ignore them and look for other ways to make their case. If relying on wartime propaganda and totally ignoring the massacres of the Turks at the hands of the Armenian armed bands proves inadequate at the end of the day to convince those who rightfully demand robust historical data, evidence and analysis, then the falsifiers would say, as is the case for the Permanent Representative of Armenia, that "Ankara attempts to revive the medieval practice of blaming for the violence the very victims of the violence, in the hope that the endless repetition of the lie will make it true". After all, in the pursuit of radical nationalist agendas, there are no limits set for committing intellectual crimes.

Turkey has never blamed thousands of innocent Armenian individuals, women and children who perished in that era for finding themselves unaided and at peril because of a radical politics in which they did not take part. But we do blame the so-called nationalist revolutionaries who have fomented war, sided by invading enemy armies, killed innocent people because of their race and religion, thus beginning the action in the full knowledge that they were thereby achieving their objective of creating two warring sides. The majority of the Armenians had no wish for war, but they had been driven into it by their senseless, revolutionary, radical and nationalist leadership acting hand in hand with armed bands.

We do blame those who refuse to this day to see the Turkish suffering; propagate that the Turks were and are evil personified; fail to take honourably their part of the onus; refuse even to glance at documents which do not fit their world view, and which do not promote their own political ends.

I can further, in the words of the Permanent Representative of Armenia, "deliberately falsify and juggle with historical and political realities."

The British were the closest party to these events, because they were the principal occupying Power of the Ottoman Empire and its capital, Istanbul. They had full control of the Ottoman Archives. As such, the British led an in-depth investigation against 144 highly placed Ottoman officials including Ministers, who were charged with war crimes against the Armenians. Subsequently, 56 out of the 144 accused were deported to the island of Malta to stand trial. After a wide-scale and frantic search of all the archival material, Sir Horace Rumbold, the British High Commissioner in Istanbul, wrote to London that the "evidence against the deportees are [sic] very few. Under these circumstances, the prosecution finds itself under grave disadvantage". But he added that "he hoped that the American Government could supply a large amount of documentary information". (FO/371/6500/E.3557)

In failing to find any legally acceptable evidence against the deportees, Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary at the time, informed Geddes, the British Ambassador at Washington, that there was "considerable difficulty" in establishing proof of guilt against the Turkish detainees at Malta, and requested him "to ascertain if the United States Government is in

possession of any evidence that could be of value for the purpose of prosecution". (FO/371/6502/E.5845)

On 13 July 1921, the British Embassy at Washington gave the following reply:

> "I regret to inform Your Lordship that there was nothing therein which could be used as evidence against the Turks who are being detained for trial at Malta. Having regard to this stipulation and the fact that the reports in the possession of the Department of State do not appear in any case to contain evidence against these Turks which would be useful for the purposes of corroborating information already in possession of His Majesty's Government, I fear that nothing is to be hoped from addressing any further inquiries to the United States Government in this matter". (FO/371/6504/E.8519)

Subsequently, all charges against the Ottoman detainees were dismissed.

More recently, on 14 April 1999, Foreign Office spokesperson Baroness Ramsay of Cartvale said the following:

> "The British Government had condemned the massacres at the time. But in the absence of unequivocal evidence that the Ottoman Administration took a specific decision to eliminate the Armenians under their control at that time, British Governments have not recognized those events as indications of genocide. Nor do we believe it is the business of Governments of today to review events of over 80 years ago, with a view to pronouncing on them."

Furthermore, acting on behalf of the British Government, Baroness Scotland of Asthal said the following in a written response on 7 February 2001:

> "The Government, in line with previous British Governments, have judged the evidence not to be sufficiently unequivocal to persuade us that these events should be categorized as genocide as defined by the 1948 United Nations Convention on Genocide, a Convention which was drafted in response to the Holocaust and is not retrospective in application. The interpretation of events in eastern Anatolia in 1915-1916 is still the subject of genuine debate among historians."

So much for "the process of achieving international recognition of the Genocide of Armenians which has appreciably gained momentum" according to the Permanent Representative of Armenia. One should ask why a handful of 30-plus deputies out of nearly 600 parliamentarians were present when the French Parliament voted on the so-called Genocide Resolution. The Permanent Representative of Armenia should keep in mind the future when the realities of a terrible war in which millions on all sides died will no longer be ignored, and when a very different picture will emerge as politics are avoided and the standard procedures of historical analysis are applied to this question. It will be seen then that there is a vast difference between history written to defend one-sided nationalist convictions and what true historical analysis should be.

Indeed, in presenting the Convention on the Prevention of the Crime of Genocide for ratification, the Secretary-General of the United Nations emphasized that genocide is a crime of "specific intent", requiring conclusive proof.

I hope that the above information contributes to the correct perception of the First World War era events in eastern Anatolia.